/87 cont./

M 864 [825] told that the gibbons and monkeys, which animate the primeval forest in the neighborhood of the villages, put the babies in the laps of the women. Thus, among the Meau, the apes occupy the position of our stork. The explanation of the facts of life is given to the children of the Meau at the time of puberty at the latest.

A M 838 839 Onanism, homosexuality, and other sexual perversions are not found among either the Akha or the Meau. In most instances I did not even succeed in explaining these concepts to my informants, but when I did, they indignantly denied their occurrence, pointing out that the ancestors and spirits would prevent such perversions.

A M 836 626 [835] [831] Within the incest prohibitions, which apply not only to marriage, but also to free love (see the section, "Marriage Obstacles and Regulations," in this chapter) and are strictly observed, since a violation, according to the belief of the natives, would be immediately punished by the ancestors and spirits, the choice of a partner is completely free for the young men, whereas public opinion, but not the young men themselves, demands chastity of the girl. In practice, however, the demands of public opinion only result in secrecy, by boys as well as girls, about everything that is connected with sexual life.

A M 836 [832] [833] In the case of younger boys, the older girls take the initiative by flirtation, at which they are masterfully adept. It often happens that a girl who teaches a young boy /88/ the arts of love-making later on becomes his chief wife, since she most likely will become pregnant. Older boys, on the other hand, often assume the training of the young girls. We frequently had an opportunity to observe an open flirtation. My wife wrote about one such observation in her journal: "May, the chief's daughter, is probably about sixteen years old and is a typical 'teen-ager' in behavior. She giggles at the least thing or bursts into loud peals of laughter over a remark shouted at her by one of the boys. It is loudest, however, when several girls are assembled. They chatter and laugh so loudly and unrestrainedly, even when we are working nearby, that we are

/92 cont./

836 [562] With regard to the boys, however, the parents are positively proud of the successes of their sons in this respect. The chief, Tsin Tsai, for instance, told me that his second youngest son was especially clever with the girls. He had surely inherited this from him, because in his youth he had been called a "tiger among the girls"!

848 [842] It is strange that illegitimate children are relatively rare, although I was repeatedly told that no contraceptive devices are used. If a girl gives birth to an illegitimate child, however, the families concerned immediately change their attitude, /93/ and the parents of the lovers forcefully insist on the marriage of the young people. The girl is ready for this under all circumstances, but it sometimes happens that a young [626] man wants to evade his obligation. In this case both families put such pressure upon him that he practically always gives in. If not, he is obliged to pay any indemnity that the girl's [684] parents demand. If he is not in a position to do this, he has to marry for otherwise he would be severely punished by the chief of the village.

627 848 If a young man should deny paternity, the testimony of the girl, or the young mother, is valid in doubtful cases. She summons her parents and those of the young man and leads them to the place where she had her meetings with the young man. She describes details which almost always force the young man to withdraw his denials. Moreover, in the generally small communities, it is probably always known "with whom a girl is going," as my informants said. On the other hand, if the [851] seducer pays the price asked by the girl's parents, the matter is regarded as settled, and the illegitimate child remains with the family of the mother and belongs to this family.

114 847 848 In contrast to my observations, separate authors report that the Meau try to get rid of illegitimate children through abortion or at the latest after the birth. Lajonquière (1),

1. II, p. 317.

for instance, writes: "If a child is conceived out of wedlock,

/166 cont./

776 825 [372] [626] [171] The spirit of fire is called tă hǒ lŭ pín. It is his function to take care of the fire. He would feel offended if one were to step over a fire, and he would take revenge in such a case by sending a tiger that would devour the perpetrator. Telford (1)

Page 133.

reports that the Meau and the Yau in western China, in the region of Tschieng /167/ Hung in Yunnan, believe in a bush spirit, Pe Tum Moi. Anyone who goes into the bush, especially to fetch water or firewood, has to be wary of him, because in the daytime this spirit changes into a frog, which, if it is put in a cage, disappears during the night. It is said that Pe Tum Moi commonly appears to human beings in the shape of a tiger that devours men and horses.

776 [844] I discovered a pair of spirits that appear only at the birth of a child. Corresponding to the fact that this pair only has a joint effect, it also has only a joint name: me yén.

[778] [756] The spirit sŭ kăn is able to increase money and property. Many Meau and all shamans erect a small altar for him in their houses. In addition to the helpful spirits already mentioned, there are a great many of them for the most varied spheres. What superhuman capacities these spirits have over and above the familiar activity, however, is unknown to the people. Individual spirits for individual persons are in any case in the minority, and there are no tutelary spirits that have to attend to a single person, so to speak.

[753] Lajonquière (1) writes of "evil spirits that may enter the

II, p. 313.

human body in order to cause sickness. They live in the interior of the earth. They are the souls of the beheaded or of the unburied dead." In Thailand I was unable to find confirmation of this conception, which can probably be traced back to Chinese influence. I discovered in general that the Meau in Thailand

[177] [829]

/168 cont./

231 776 [731] [789] [243] If a village is plagued by many sicknesses, the Meau erect a symbolic gate out of three crossbeams about 40 or 50 meters from the village on the path leading to their settlement. Here the dog is hanged, and it is assumed that henceforth, as a guardian spirit, it will seek to prevent evil spirits from treading the paths that lead into the village. The same procedure is followed before laying out a new rice field.

[764] [775] In addition the Meau practice in different ways the custom of killing a dog when a human being dies; as a spirit it is supposed to guide the soul of the deceased into the other world.

776 My informant explained to me that over this whole host of spirits there stands only one spirit to whom they all, even the ancestors, are subject, "as to a king." He is invisible like all the other spirits, but in contrast to the latter he does not have human form, and lives simultaneously in heaven and in the earth, he is omnipresent. This chief spirit or, if one prefers, "high god" of the Meau, is bisexual, that is, male and female at the same time. He is the "Father and Mother spirit" of the Meau, who call him nă thu pen dọ nă thu /169/ pẹ̆ dŏ. Savina (1)

[114] [775]

1. II, p. 243.

gives his name as Ndo Chu or Chu Lau and maintains that this chief spirit, according to Meau belief, created the world. I was unable to find any confirmation for this notion, however.

It is not his affair to determine birth and death, but he is turned to when especially important reasons come up, for instance, when evil spirits are to be fought, and therefore especially in the case of epidemics and similar events. The animals of the forest are likewise under the jurisdiction of the high Father-Mother spirit. Therefore, the hunters must turn to him with their request for rich booty.

[931] [825] [224] [993] The Meau told me that human beings do not know who created the world (concerning the legends about this, see the chapter, "Myths and Fairy Tales"). They also do not know who makes lightning and thunder and do not have any clear conception as to the origin of these natural phenomena. They presume, however, that they are linked with the actions of the

[821] [626]

Akha A04
Miao AE5

/169 cont: /

M 776 821 [626] spirits and regard lightning as the avenging power, so to speak, with which these spirits punish rebellious mortals.

The Meau do not know how an eclipse of the sun or the moon is produced. As soon as such natural events occur, one must shut himself up at home and may not in any case look at the stars because the latter are being eaten by evil spirits. If one should look nevertheless, the spirits concerned would likewise eat him in an instant. How it happens that the "devoured" stars appear again cannot be explained, nor is it attempted.

M 177 821 [776] The Meau also do not associate the aforementioned natural phenomena with the supreme "Father-Mother" spirit. How little the religious views of the peoples with whom the Meau come in contact have been adopted is shown by the fact that they pay no attention to comets, whose appearance is of great significance for their Laotian and Chinese neighbors. This is all the more striking since among the Chinese the appearance of a comet signifies the outbreak of a war or revolution, among the Lao the death of a person of royal blood, both being conceptions which, in view of the history and mentality of the Meau, could certainly psychologically /170/ make an impression on them. As has been said, however, although the Meau know the deities of the neighboring peoples, they are little influenced by their views.

A 776 Among the Akha, too, I discovered the conception of a supreme being, which is found in such a marked fashion in the religion of the Meau, and, to be sure, among the Akha it is the god of heaven, ǎdŏduchŏ. He likewise resides in and above the clouds, and all the other spirits are subject to him. Accordingly, A [782] he automatically partakes of all the sacrifices offered by the human beings to the other spirits, and therefore special offerings to him are regarded as unnecessary. Telford's (1) opinion that

1. Page 98.

A [773] such a conception is only "vague" among the Akha contrasts with these findings. Perhaps, however, Telford's words refer to the spirit "yăbĭdĕlăhăt," who created the universe. In any case,

/212 cont./

784 One of the taboos of the Meau is that it is inadvisable to
262 set foot in places inhabited by spirits. It is expressly forbidden
[776] to eat the meat of the large black squirrel. Anyone who violates this taboo will die immediately, according to the belief of the Meau. Lajonquière (1) speaks of a prohibition against eating horse

1. II, p. 303.

meat. There is no such taboo among the Meau in Thailand. To
[231] be sure, the Meau investigated by me did not raire any horses
[782] at all. In answer to my question, however, I was told that as a rule horses are not used as sacrificial animals and are eaten only in exceptional cases, because horses are too rare and therefore too valuable to be slaughtered.

272 Furthermore, among the taboos there is the prohibition
784 against ever drinking the milk of any animal. I was shown how
825 strictly every taboo is generally observed by an incident that I
123 experienced, because in the course of time I had made such a name for myself among the Meau as a doctor that people came to me from afar in order to have me treat them or give them medicine. Among those who came to me seeking to be cured, there was a Meau mother who did not have enough milk for her baby. The child, about two months old, was already starved, and /213/ all the Meau, including the mother, were aware of this. In spite of many proofs of their confidence in me and in spite of the almost incredible love of the Meau for their children, I did not succeed in persuading the Meau to permit me to give the baby cow's milk. Even the child's mother could not be persuaded, although there was a milk cow available and I made it quite clear that the baby was otherwise doomed to certain death. The child did soon die of undernourishment.

123 On another occasion I found the wife of a chief among my
262 patients. She asked me to examine her and was convinced that
[846] she suffered from an abdominal ailment, for, as she told me,
[164] full of remorse, she had violated the taboo that women in childbed are forbidden to eat meat for one month after the
[621] birth of the child. She now believed that the spirits were punishing her for the transgression. An examination of this sick

/213 cont./

123 262 [164] woman showed that she was suffering from hookworms, which could easily be cured.

I have already mentioned the taboo which comes into effect, in case of a death in a village, for the village community as well as for the mourners and especially for the family whose member has died. Food prohibitions are not tied in with death, but after the death of the woman, the children and the widower have to refrain from sexual intercourse for one year whereas after the death of the husband, widows are subject to this commandment for only one week.

784 765 [262] [834]

834 846 Marabail (1) reports of the Meau in Tonkin that after the

1. Page 451.

birth of a child the parents may not have sexual intercourse with each other.

835 The incest taboo is observed very strictly among the Meau in Thailand. It is forbidden for young blood-relatives of the opposite sex to stand together or to look or smile at each other. Since, as I stated earlier, any Meau man to whom a girl offers a glass of alcohol views this, according to custom, as an invitation, it is strictly forbidden for girls /214/ to serve alcohol or even to drink to men against whom the marriage prohibition applies for them.

[273] [832]

533 461 784 [626] In the fields of the so musically inclined Meau, one does not hear singing during the work or during rests, because this would violate a taboo. It is believed to be certain that non-observance would bring a misfortune, that one of the workers would be hurt, either by a tool or by part of a falling tree.

784 [177] Just as the Meau in their cult practices do not in general want to borrow anything from the pertinent customs of the other peoples living around them, so are the many prohibitions of the Chinese unknown to them or ignored. On the other hand great significance is attached to every native taboo. Every taboo is in force for the entire life of the individual as well as for the whole tribe; the only exceptions are taboos that are limited in time, which are automatically lifted after the

[756]

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/214 cont./

M 784 [756] 626 [821] corresponding period has elapsed. Otherwise, however, not even the shaman has the power nowadays to lift or to modify a taboo. The people are convinced that non-observance, which would bring the punishment called for in connection with the particular prohibition, would be generally punished by the spirits and ancestors so that lightning would strike the malefactor and kill him.

A 776 782 [171] The cultic practices of the Akha are generally similar to those of the Meau, but quite different in particulars. The Akha devote a regular cult to all the spirits and ancestors, with the exception of the god of heaven, "ɤ̆dɔ̆dɯ̆chɔ̆," and the spirit of the world. The god of heaven, it will be recalled, remains excluded from the regular cult, because in the view of the Akha he dwells above and below the clouds, all the other spirits are his subjects, and therefore he, of course, partakes of all the sacrifices offered to them. As has also been stated, the creator of the world, "yɤ̆bɪ̆dɛ̆lăhɤ̆t," about whom I could learn only vague ideas, is likewise offered no sacrifices, but I was unable to obtain more detailed information on this.

A 782 The Akha, too, view the sacrifice as a means of making the spirits and ancestors favorably disposed toward them and likewise use invocations to establish contact with the spirit concerned or the ancestors during the sacrifice. In contrast to the

A [516] Meau, however, the Akha do not assume a definite position while uttering their prayers. /215/ Some may be seen bending one

A [788] knee, others squat, and still others stand. Set prayer formulas, here again in parallel with the Meau, are also unknown among the Akha. One turns to the spirit with ordinary words and explains the matter to him in detail. Such prayers or invocations are always associated with the offering of sacrifices, which, however, in comparison with the Meau, are relatively rare. /Fig. 56 appears here./

A 782 778 [241] The sacrifices are usually offered at the presumable abode of the spirit concerned, if special sacrificial places or little temples have not been erected for this by the Akha (Fig. 56). For example, before clearing is begun, a small temple abode is erected for the field spirit, yɤ̆myɤ̆tsɨ̆, and sacrifices are made

/248 cont./

c) Criminal Law

673 Regarded as crimes among the Meau are: theft, robbery, manslaughter, lying, bodily injury, and offense by assault, whereas verbal offenses are not ordinarily punished. Furthermore, kidnapping, especially of children, is regarded as a crime. In former times, treason was added to the list of possible crimes which were punished.

684 [769] [622] Incest, on the other hand, is punished exclusively by the ancestors; the people do not interfere. If it becomes known, however, it is regarded as the utmost disgrace.

At first it seems surprising that rape generally remains unpunished. Since, however, in the life of the Meau a girl can hardly be taken unawares without some co-operation on her part -- there are always female companions or family members nearby when a girl leaves a village -- it is assumed that a girl who goes off alone with a boy is prepared for every eventuality. If a case of rape should occur, however, the girl's father demands two or three pieces of silver from the culprit, who will pay without opposition. The case is different if the girl becomes pregnant. Then no distinction is made between rape and voluntary surrender. Even then, however, as was set forth in detail in the chapter, "Life in the Community," the section, "Courtship and Betrothal," no pressure is exerted for marriage. /Ills. 46-51 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /249/ although the girl's parents in particular will make every attempt to bring about the marriage.

[848] If a girl who is pregnant as a consequence of the wrong done to her should give birth to a stillborn child, the culprit must pay the same price for the stillborn child as is charged for children who must be turned over to a creditor in lieu of payment, namely, 70 pieces of silver for a boy, and 50 pieces for a girl.

AKha A04
Miao AE5

M 687 /250 cont./ In former times treason may also have been punished by death, but none of my informants could remember a case.

M 696 /251/ Capital punishment is executed in three ways. Beating the criminal to death is regarded as the mildest form, and decapitation is regarded as more severe punishment. As the most severe form, the condemned person is first shot and then beheaded. Capital punishment is not only meted out to men, [M 562] but also to women.

Dhuraratsadorn (1), as he writes, could not learn anything

1. Page 170.

about capital punishment. It was only reported to him that condemned persons "quietly disappeared." The author continues: [M 626] "Nobody wants to have anything to do with the family of the executed person, and even children refuse to play with his children, because the Meau believe that they are persons of a bad breed."

A 673 Among the Akha, too, there are fixed punishments for various offenses. Theft, robbery, arson, bodily injury, and [681] adultery, as well as the violation of the incest prohibitions and false testimony by a witness, are regarded as crimes.

M [673] In contrast to the Meau, the Akha make no distinction between a deed that was premeditated and one caused by negligence. Even the latter is punished as though it had been done intentionally. Like the procedure among the Meau, the A 692 sentence is made in accordance with established customary law with which the older men are thoroughly familiar through experience. The verdict itself is decided by a majority vote of the assembly of house-owners and the decision is regarded as incontestable; it is announced by the village chief.

A 674 In the villages visited by me, I was told that murder and homicide, as well as kidnapping, had not occurred within human memory; I could therefore not ascertain the penalties for these crimes. It was always said that such serious crimes do not occur among the Akha.

Miao AE5

/253 cont./

692 the office of judge for him. In such cases, if an appeal is made [622] against his decision, the village chief is then the next higher [596] court. In disputes within a large family, the head of the family officiates. For serious decisions, assemblies under the chairman- [693] ship of the village chief or the great chief are convened, as I have reported in the chapter, "Political Organization."

695 The judge, with the help of witnesses, tries to determine the facts of the case. Special importance is attached to the testimony of the witnesses, and can be, according to my experience, because among the Meau the witnesses always tell the truth, at least subjectively. Dhuraratsadorn (1) seems to have

1. Page 170.

made similar observations: "They believe that the Meau witnesses always tell the truth. In case of a crime, the Meau seldom question witnesses. If someone accuses another, the accused is either convicted or punished, or he may deny his guilt, /254/ in which case a fine is imposed on the accuser in favor of the accused. If it later turns out that he falsely denied [681] his guilt, he is expelled from the community and must leave the [626] village, for otherwise he would be killed."

In case of a criminal offense for which there are no witnesses, the investigations are discontinued after three years. Nevertheless, there is no time limitation for crimes. Even if the perpetrator is not discovered until ten years later, perhaps accidentally, he is punished exactly as if he had just been caught in the act.

In civil-law cases, too, when the assertions of the parties are contradictory, the judge tries to determine the truth through witnesses. The underlying principle is that the plaintiff and not the accused must prove his assertions. Oaths and oath formulas are unknown. Witnesses, like the parties, are strictly obliged to [577] tell the truth, regardless of whether or not it is damaging to the witness or whether there are ties of kinship with the parties or [687] witnesses. A refusal to give testimony is not permitted; false statements are punished severely.